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Monday, October 20, 2008

Vol. V No. 202
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INSIDE TODAY'S BULLETIN

Connecticut Approves Gay Marriage

By Joe Murray, The Bulletin
 10/11/2008

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Opening a new front in the battle over marriage, Connecticut became the third state in the nation to legalize gay marriage after the state's Supreme Court held "established equal protection principles" etched into Connecticut's constitution require the recognition of gay marriage.

Equating the prohibition against gay marriage with past marriage bans prohibiting interracial marriage, Justice Richard N. Palmer, in a 4-3 decision, held, "Our conventional understanding of marriage must yield to a more contemporary appreciation of the rights entitled to constitutional protection."

"Interpreting our state constitutional provisions in accordance with firmly established equal protection principles leads inevitably to the conclusion that gay persons are entitled to marry the otherwise qualified same sex partner of their choice. To decide otherwise would require us to apply one set of constitutional principles to gay persons and another to all others."

Friday's decision made the Constitution State the third state in the country to legalize gay marriage through the court system. In 2004 the Massachusetts Supreme Court recognized gay marriage and earlier this year the California Supreme Court followed suit.

Golden State voters, however, will be deciding the fate of gay marriage in California as they vote on Proposition 8; a measure amending the state's constitution to ban gay marriage and effectively reversing the judicial ruling.

Justice Peter T. Zarella wrote a forceful dissent in the case arguing there the constitution was void of a fundamental right to gay marriage.

"The ancient definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman has its basis in biology, not bigotry," Mr. Zarella wrote. "If the state no longer has an interest in the regulation of procreation, then that is a decision for the legislature or the people of the state and not this court."

The Connecticut ruling highlighted a nation sharply divided over the debate as to whether gay couples should be permitted to enter into civil marriages. Gay rights advocates praised the decision as advancing equality and pro-family organizations blasted the court for over stepping its bounds.

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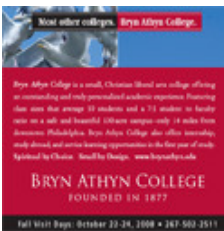
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"This is a very proud day for every American who believes in the promise of equal rights for all," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese.

"The court did its job by making clear that the state constitution guarantees the same rights and protections for everyone. This decision strengthens Connecticut families."

Opponents of gay marriage argued the decision proved that civil unions place states on the slippery slope to gay marriage and should not be enforced.

"The Court did confirm our warnings that legalizing civil unions will be used as a stepping stone to same-sex marriage. The Justices said Connecticut's civil union law was not enough, thus they had to go the next step to so-called same-sex 'marriage,'" noted Diane Gramley, president of the American Family Association of PA.

"The Connecticut Supreme Court has trampled the law by voting to sanction 'same-sex marriage' and elevating practices most societies condemn," said Mat Staver, Founder of Liberty Counsel and Dean of Liberty University School of Law. "Since the court's opinion is not worth the paper it is written on, I urge the executive branch, beginning with the Governor, to ignore the court's ridiculous decision."

The Governor, as well as other state lawmakers, is not heeding Mr. Staver's call to ignore a binding judicial decision.

"The Supreme Court has spoken," said Gov. M. Jodi Rell. "I do not believe their voice reflects the majority of the people of Connecticut. However, I am also firmly convinced that attempts to reverse this decision -- either legislatively or by amending the state Constitution - will not meet with success."

Republicans in Connecticut's Legislature also showed an unwillingness to oppose the ruling.

"While I believe these decisions are better left to elected representatives, it is ultimately the province of the State Supreme Court to interpret our constitution," State Senate Minority Leader John McKinney, a Republican, said. "The Court carried out that responsibility today and ruled that the institution of marriage in Connecticut must include same-sex couples. Whether people agree or disagree, we all need to respect the Court's decision and abide by the ruling."

There is a measure on the ballot this November asking voters whether Connecticut should hold its first constitutional convention in 40 years. Opponents of gay marriage are pushing for the convention in hopes of amending the state's constitution to define marriage between one man and one woman.

Connecticut has long been a trailblazer on the gay rights issue, as the state was the first to establish civil unions in 2005 without a court order.

Absent procedural attempts to delay the ruling, it is expected gay couples could begin to marry in 20 days.

The case, Kerrigan & Mock v. Connecticut Dept. of Public Health, was filed after gay couples were denied the marriage licenses in 2004.

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Added: Saturday October 11, 2008 at 01:56 PM EST

And justice for ALL

This to me is a non-issue. If you don't agree with marriage equality, don't marry someone of the same sex! As a school teacher, I don't ever recall reading/citing the words..."with liberty and justice for ALL" and seeing the word, "except". Separate but equal does not, has not and should not work. We can not "eenie meenie miney



moe" through our neighborhoods and point to who is allowed marriage or not. As a christian and American, I am for equality, love, and acceptance to all human life. God bless, Stephanie

Stephanie Kansas, Washington, D.C.

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